



STATE OF IDAHO
DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

1410 North Hilton • Boise, Idaho 83706 • (208) 373-0502

C.L. "Butch" Otter, Governor
Toni Hardesty, Director

May 2007

Dear Auto Recycler:

Mercury auto switches were used to control convenience lighting and antilock braking systems (ABS) and can be found in many vehicles manufactured prior to model year 2003. Mercury is a toxic metal and, if not properly collected and managed, can impact our environment. If these switches are not removed prior to the steel melting process, the mercury can be emitted into the air where it eventually contaminates our waters and could make some fish unsafe for consumption.

As an Idaho recycling/dismantling business, I'd like to cordially invite you to participate in a new national voluntary program to remove and recycle mercury switches from vehicles, before they are crushed and shredded for recycling. Pellet-sized mercury switches can be found in convenience lights in trunk and hood compartments and in anti-lock brakes of some vehicles built as late as the 2002 model year. Aside from protecting Idaho's natural environment from the release of mercury (a toxic pollutant), participation in this 'new' program may also provide advantages in dealing with future federal regulations that could affect your business (e.g., Area Source rule for Electric Arc Furnaces) positioning your company to effectively meet potential future regulatory challenges.

The National Vehicle Mercury Switch Recovery Program (NVMSRP) was formed as a result of an agreement reached in August 2006, by representatives of dismantlers, automotive steel and scrap industries, environmental groups, a national association of state government environmental agency officials (ECOS), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

One NVMSRP goal is to maximize switch collection nationally. A \$4 million fund has been established to reward dismantlers/recyclers on a first-come, first-serve basis for their efforts by paying \$1 per mercury light switch or assembly received (switches do not need to be removed from the assemblies), and \$3 per ABS module received.

End of Life Vehicle Solutions (ELVS), a not for profit corporation formed by the automobile manufacturers, will provide educational materials and will collect and recycle automotive switches at no cost to you. The program will accept convenience lighting assemblies containing mercury switches, ABS modules containing mercury switches, and the individual switch pellets from convenience lighting assemblies. However, you do not need to remove switches from lighting assemblies for this program.

To join the NVMSRP switch collection program operated by ELVS, simply contact ELVS at: 877-225-ELVS (3587), or visit www.elvsolutions.org, or complete and return the enclosed post card to receive a collection bucket, updated educational materials about mercury switch removal, a list of vehicles with the potential to contain mercury switches, and a detailed instruction sheet for shipping the ELVS buckets. ELVS has subcontracted the actual collection and transportation costs of the bucket to the Environmental Quality Company (EQ). When you are ready to return full buckets of switches, EQ will provide you with additional/or replacement buckets as requested and, again, at no cost to you.

We hope that you will join this important initiative and work cooperatively to protect Idaho's environment. Should you have questions regarding Idaho DEQ's hazardous waste regulations regarding mercury, please contact John Brueck at (208) 373-0458, or by e-mail at John.Brueck@deq.idaho.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Toni", followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that extends to the right.

Toni Hardesty
Director

TH:JB:js